**Sermon for Sunday 9th February 2025**

*By Rev Petra Elsmore*

**Family Service with Baptism of Rigby Miles Alder**

**BIBLE READING**

**Isaiah 1:6-8**

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on his throne, high and exalted, and his robe filled the whole Temple. 2 Around him flaming creatures were standing, each of which had six wings. Each creature covered its face with two wings, and its body with two, and used the other two for flying. 3 They were calling out to each other:*

*“Holy, holy, holy!
The Lord Almighty is holy!
His glory fills the world.”*

*4 The sound of their voices made the foundation of the Temple shake, and the Temple itself became filled with smoke.*

*5 I said, “There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes I have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”*

*6 Then one of the creatures flew down to me, carrying a burning coal that he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. 7 He touched my lips with the burning coal and said, “This has touched your lips, and now your guilt is gone, and your sins are forgiven.”*

*8 Then I heard the Lord say, “Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?”*

*I answered, “I will go! Send me!”*

**GOSPEL READING**

**Luke 5:1-11**

*One day Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret while the people pushed their way up to him to listen to the word of God. 2 He saw two boats pulled up on the beach; the fishermen had left them and were washing the nets. 3 Jesus got into one of the boats—it belonged to Simon—and asked him to push off a little from the shore. Jesus sat in the boat and taught the crowd.*

*4 When he finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Push the boat out further to the deep water, and you and your partners let down your nets for a catch.”*

*5 “Master,” Simon answered, “we worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I will let down the nets.” 6 They let them down and caught such a large number of fish that the nets were about to break. 7 So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats so full of fish that the boats were about to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw what had happened, he fell on his knees before Jesus and said, “Go away from me, Lord! I am a sinful man!”*

*9 He and the others with him were all amazed at the large number of fish they had caught. 10 The same was true of Simon's partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. Jesus said to Simon, “Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.”*

*11 They pulled the boats up on the beach, left everything, and followed Jesus.*

**SERMON**

***Opening with a Fishing game***

*It seems that in our Gospel story, to start with, the disciples had quite a hard time trying to catch some fish. Anybody here is good at fishing? How hard it is to get a good catch? Shall we see? I’ve got a game here, and we can let Rigby and couple of his friends see how they get on with fishing. (Give the children time to catch the magnetic fish, see who is the winner, was it easy or tricky? Was it fun?)*

Going back to our reading, the verse that caught my attention was verse 5:

*“Master,” Simon answered, “we worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I will let down the nets.”*

Simon Peter said to Jesus, “Master, we worked hard all night long and caught nothing…”You can almost hear the weariness in his voice, he really did not want to try again, but somehow he found it in himself to say, “But if you say so, I will let down the nets,”… and his perseverance, his instinctive response to Jesus, his faith in Jesus led to a great blessing, an enormous catch, a large number of fish….a great reward indeed.

As I was thinking about this baptism service, I was thinking about parenting, Sam and Sophie brought Rigby today to be baptised. And in parenting, you experience such a mix of emotions, don’t you? When you have children, often with great mix of emotions, you are watching them grow, watching them explore the world, watching them growing into being their own people, independent of you, you are learning to be alongside them as they discover who they are and guiding them through life. It’s a journey full of excitement and joy, full of love, but also anxiety at times and often exhaustion and weariness, when you deal with sleepless nights, busyness of family life and whatever challenges life may throw at you.

And like with the disciples, weariness is something we all know too well, but when we carry on, when we persevere as parents, we come to know the blessings too.

Life in today’s world is not always easy. There is a lot, which can be very exciting yet quite shallow, and the catch from the shallow waters is not always substantial. We are drawn into a world of social media and struggle to keep up, or a world where we get too preoccupied with appearances, and try to build an image that is supposed to be always perfect and always composed, world which too often is fast moving, and leaves us exhausted and weary. Baptism presents us with an opportunity to step into the deep waters, it invites us to step into a life where Jesus is alongside us, a life which highlights the values that help us to cope with difficulties and pressures and most importantly show us grace.  Baptism opens for us a life where we come to know ourselves as the children of God, and come to know God’s love in our lives. And as we come to know the love of God in our lives, we are called to share that love with others.

Sam and Sophie, God has blessed you with three wonderful children and today, you will be making promises on behalf of Rigby, and for yourselves, as his parents as well. You will be making promises that you will bring Rigby up in the knowledge and love of God. As you bring Rigby for Baptism, you are stepping into the deep waters, the waters of God’s grace, the waters from which God’s blessings flow. The thing about God’s grace is that it always comes in abundance. And our prayer for you today is is, that in your family, as you share the love of God with Poppy, Quinn and Rigby, that you all may know his grace and as the grace overflows, that you may be blessing to each other and to those around you. May God bless you greatly. Amen.

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**Prayer for Rigby, on the occasion of his baptism:**

Rigby, may the Lord look over you,
this and every day;
May the Lord guide your footsteps and keep you safe,
May the Lord grant you health,
strength, joy and fulfilment throughout your life.
May the Lord be a blessing to you,
leading you in the way of peace, wisdom, love and humility,

so that you may in turn be a blessing to others.
May the Lord fill you with light and enfold you in love,
now and forever more,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.